



Oaklands Junior School

Attendance Policy



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Applies to:	The Corvus Learning Trust (CLT) as a whole and to all schools in the Trust
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Policy Statement:	CLT is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance
Purpose:	To ensure that pupils and parents know the expectations of the school with regards to attendance
Responsibility for Approval:	Board of Trustees
Responsibility for Updating:	CLT Behaviour & Inclusion Lead
Related Policies/Guidance:	CLT P1 - Safeguarding and CP Policy
DfE- Children missing education - Sept 2016	Oaklands Junior School Behaviour Policy

1. Introduction

We believe that regular attendance at school is the key to enabling a pupil's social, emotional, educational progress and attainment. By attending school, pupils will gain the skills they need to achieve successful outcomes for themselves and their futures.

We believe that every day of education matters and indeed every lesson. As attendance deteriorates so does achievement, friendships, self-esteem and performance. Children who are persistently late or absent will soon become behind with work and then may not understand current lessons when they return. This can have a negative knock-on effect that may impede their ability to concentrate, can result in poor behaviour and their ability to engage in lessons.

2. Policy Statement

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Dec 2015](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3. The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families (e.g. Attendance Action Plan (AAP))

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the headteacher and she can be contacted via admin@oaklands-jun.wokingham.sch.uk or Tel: 01344 773496.

4.4. Staff member monitoring attendance (Attendance Officer)

The staff member monitoring attendance is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section eight)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working in a multi-agency approach to address persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The staff member monitoring attendance is Nikki Lenon our Parent Support Adviser and she can be contacted via nlenon@oaklands-jun.wokingham.sch.uk or Tel: 01344 773496

4.5. Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am on the same day.

4.6. School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to Nikki Lenon our Parent Support Adviser in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.7. Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am, e.g. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4.8. Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

5. Recording attendance

5.1. Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am.

5.2. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section eight).

Telephone: 01344 773496 or email: admin@oaklands-jun.wokingham.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3. Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

A Leave of Absence form may be requested at the school office or is available on our school website. Parents may also ask for a form to be sent home.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section six to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

A phone call or for persistent lates, a letter home.

5.5. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact siblings' schools or our Educational Welfare Officer
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving other appropriate agencies

5.6. Children Missing from Education (CME)

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. Enquiries will include working closely with the Education Welfare Services (EWS) and completing the CME paperwork as required.

5.7. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels e.g. by a half termly/termly letter where attendance is a concern; similarly attendance may be discussed by teachers at parents' evenings and finally reported on end of year reports, with attendance below national average (95%) and persistent absentee (below 90%). Parents may also request a copy of attendance at any time.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1. Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as the following but this is not an exhaustive list and each case will be assessed on circumstances e.g. bereavement - death of a close member of the family or attendance at their funeral; respite care of a looked after child; housing crisis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least a week before the absence and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via

<https://oaklandsjunior-school.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Corvus-Leave-of-Absence-Request-Form.pdf> or requesting a paper copy from the school office.

Guidance notes on requesting a leave of absence can be found in Appendix II

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Taking part in a national sports/award event.

6.2. Legal sanctions

The school or Local Authority (LA) can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the LA.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, LA officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Celebrated in a whole school assembly with certificates awarded.

8. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is always monitored in context, knowing our children, as there are individual circumstances of which we are aware concerning some families, particularly with absences for regular medical appointments.

We always recommend seeing a doctor where regular ill health is a concern and in addition, if ill health continues then we will write a letter requiring medical evidence for any further absences to be authorised e.g. sight of prescribed medication or medical appointment.

Taking these circumstances into account, termly monitoring with our Education Welfare Officer will include all pupils who fall below the National Average (Below 90%) and we will meet with our feeder Infant school/Parent Support Adviser for families who have children in both schools to determine if there is a trend or a joint letter needed.

8.1. Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the LGB.

8.2. Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3. Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or LA) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Closely monitoring individual attendance e.g. termly meetings to review attendance that falls below National Average (90%) with letters sent home for pupils who are often experiencing illness for which there is no known medical reason.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by CLT Behaviour & Inclusion Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the CLT Policies Review Committee.

Appendix I: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

Code	Definition	Scenario
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix II: Guidance Notes ahead of completing and submitting an Application for leave of absence during term time

This School's Attendance Policy is set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following;

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued on school attendance matters

This School, the Local Education Authority and the Government all believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be "exceptional" circumstances that may justify a Headteacher's decision to authorise the absence.

The explanatory note to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which themselves amend The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006, states;

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application

This school's Attendance Policy includes the following;

- Any application is to be made in writing, in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides, using the leave of absence request form. These may be obtained from the school office AND
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher, or person authorised by the Headteacher to do so, considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed by letter within five school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice may be issued to each parent for each child.

The current rate per parent per child is:

- £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days

Please note the following potential consequences should term time leave be taken without authorisation of the school.

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a

substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that child to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund". The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of an adult offender receiving the maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered by this School's Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £115.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a "Parenting Order", not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a "Parenting Order" or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000.00, and or any other non-imprisonable Sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Note: The term "Parent" is as defined under Section 576 Education 1996, meaning;

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined by the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.